

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSC-05 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /021 R

66612

DRAFTED BY: S/S-O: JHOGANSON

APPROVED BY: S/S-O: JHOGANSON

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O 270019Z AUG 75 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

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LIMDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT LISBON 4926 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BONN LONDON MADRID
MOSCOW PARIS STOCKHOLM NATO DIA AND USCINCEUR 26 AUG 75

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4926

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PO

SUBJ: FABIAO CEASES EFFORT AT FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FROM RELIABLE SOURCE THAT GEN FABIAO
HAS GIVEN UP HIS EFSORT TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT. BOTH FABIAO AND
OTELO ARE NOW SYMPATHETIC BYSTANDERS RATHER THAN PARTICIPANTS IN
ATTEMPT TO PUSH OUT GONCALVES. JORNAL NOVO REPORTS THAT NAVY
CHIEF AZEVEDO HAS BEEN ASKED BY PRESIDENT TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT.
ANTUNES FORCES ARE REPORTEDLY DISHEARTENED AND WAY MAY BE OPEN
FOR PREEMPTIVE PUTSCH BY GONCALVES AND HIS COMMUNIST ALLIES.
SOURCE OF THIS REPORT HAS BEEN OVERLY PESSIMISTIC IN PAST, BUT
TEMPORIZING BY COSTA GOMES IS CERTAINLY TAKING ITS TOLL AND THE
TIDE, OR AT LEAST THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE, COULD BE TURNING
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AGAINST MELO ANTUNES AND CO. END SUMMARY

1. A RELIABLE SOURCE IN SOCIALIST PARTY TOLD US THAT GEN FABIAO
HAS CEASED HIS EFFORTS TO FORM A SIXTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

AND THAT COPCON COMMANDER GEN OTELO CARVALHO IS NO LONGER ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE EFFORT TO OUST THE PRIME MINISTER. BOTH OTELO AND FABIAO CONTINUE TO SYMPATHIZE WITH THE MELO ANTUNES GROUP--BUT AS INTERESTED BYSTANDERS RATHER THAN PARTICIPANTS.

2. THIS DEVELOPMENT, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, HAS DISHEARTENED THE ANTUNES GROUP AND COULD LEAD THE WAY TO PREEMPTIVE PUTSCH BY GONCALVES AND HIS COMMUNIST ALLIES. FIRST STEP IN PUTSCH WOULD BE ARREST OF PRESIDENT. PRESIDENT IS APPARENTLY AWARE OF THIS POSSIBILITY AND HAS INCREASED THE GUARD AT HIS BELEM PALACE. BECAUSE OF HIS CONCERN OVER THE RELIABILITY OF THE MILITARY POLICE GUARDING FORT SAO JULIAO, WHICH THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN USING FOR HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS AND AS WEEKEND RETREAT, COSTA GOMES DECIDED TO REMAIN AT HIS BELEM QUARTERS, AND DISCONTINUE USE OF SAO JULIAO.

3. PCP MILITIAS: ADDING TO CONCERN OF ANTUNES GROUP IS COMPLETION BY PCP OF FORMATION OF 3500 MAN ARMED MILITIA IN THE LISBON AREA. ANTUNES SUPPORTERS ARE SO IMPRESSED WITH PCP STRENGTH IN LISBON THAT THEY HAVE DECIDED IN EVENT OF ARMED CONFLICT TO ABANDON LISBON AND RELY ON STRATEGY OF SURROUNDING AND STARVING OUT CITY RATHER THAN MAKING DIRECT CHALLENGE TO COMMUNIST MILITIA AND ARMY UNITS SUCH AS LISBON LIGHT ARTILLERY REGT (RALIS) AND MILITARY POLICE THAT MIGHT SUPPORT GONCALVES IN A CONFRONTATION.

4. JORNAL NOVO, (JN) WHICH HAS INSIDE LINE TO ANTUNES GROUP, ALSO REPORTS IN AUG 26 EDITION THAT FABIAO HAS CEASED HIS EFFORTS TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT. JN ADDS THAT NAVY CHIEF PIHEIRO AZEVEDO (A PRESIDENTIAL CRONY) MAY HAVE BEEN ASKED TO TAKE ON THE TASK OF FORMING A GOVERNMENT AND THAT DIRECTORY VOTED TO READMIT ANTUNES NINE TO REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. GONCALVES IS SAID TO HAVE OPPOSED THE RETURN OF THE NINE.

5. COMMENT: DEPARTURE OF INDECISIVE FABIAO AND IDEOLOGICALLY CONFUSED OTELO FROM ACTIVE COOPERATION WITH ANTUNES GROUP SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING. CONTINUED TEMPORIZING BY COSTA GOMES AND
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STEADY DRUMBEAT OF COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA DIRECTED AT CREATING DIVISIONS WITHIN MELO ANTUNES CAMP IS CERTAINLY TAKING ITS TOLL. WHILE REPORTED CONTINUED OPTIMISM OF MELO ANTUNES MUST BE TAKEN WITH SOME SKEPTICISM, THIS PARTICULAR CONTACT SEEMS TO BE OVERLY PESSIMISTIC. HE IS VERY CLOSE TO SOARES, WHO HIMSELF IS MOODY, AND OUR CONTACT HAS WARNED OF COMMUNIST POWER PLAYS BEFORE. HE MAY BE RIGHT THIS TIME BUT THE THOUGHT THAT GONCALVES WOULD MOVE AGAINST COSTA GOMES, WHO HAS SAVED HIM FROM OUSTER DOESN'T RING TRUE. ALSO, IN THE PRESENT ATMOSPHERE THE SOCIALISTS ARE UNABLE FOR SECURITY REASONS TO MAINTAIN THE CONTACTS WITH MELO ANTUNES THEY HAD BEFORE; THEY MAY NOT HAVE ALL THE FACTS. NEVERTHELESS WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE TIMDE OR AT LEAST THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE, COULD BE TURNING AGAINST MELO ANTUNES & CO.

CARLUCCI

UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMMUNISTS, GOVERNMENT REFORM, POLITICAL SITUATION, TOSEC
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE203522
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: S/S-O: JHOGANSON
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750295-0809
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197508102/baaaatfh.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <08 OCT 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971008
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PINT, PO, PINT
To: SECRETARY NIACT INFO JERUSALEM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006